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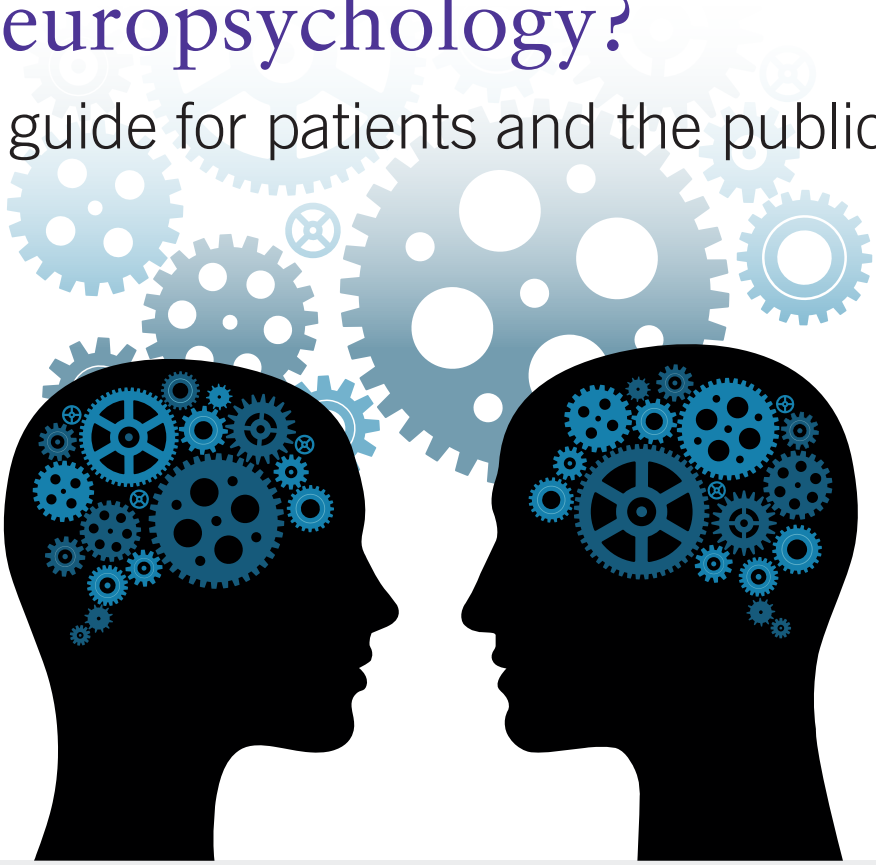
Promoting excellence in psychology

What is clinical neuropsychology?

A guide for patients and the public



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The British
Psychological Society
Division of Neuropsychology

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What is clinical neuropsychology?

Neuropsychology investigates the links between damage to a particular part of the brain and changes in thinking, feeling and behaviour. Clinical neuropsychology applies this knowledge to assessing and treating people with brain injuries and other conditions that affect how the brain functions.

What is a clinical neuropsychologist?

A clinical neuropsychologist is a clinical psychologist who has completed advanced specialist training to work with people that have illnesses or injuries that affect the brain. (Clinical psychologists are psychologists who have been specially trained to assess and treat problems such as anxiety, depression and other mental health problems.)

Brain injuries and neurological conditions can affect the way a person thinks, feels and behaves. It is the clinical neuropsychologist's job to assess and help to treat these problems so that the person and their family are better able to cope with the impact the condition may have.

For example, a person who has had a traumatic brain injury might have problems with their memory, how they understand other people's behaviour and how they manage their own feelings.

Who do clinical neuropsychologists work with?

Clinical neuropsychologists work with people who have, or who are thought to have, illnesses or injuries that affect the function of the brain or central nervous system.

This includes illnesses and injuries such as:

- Stroke
- Epilepsy
- Traumatic brain injury
- Multiple sclerosis
- Parkinson's disease
- Dementia

Where do clinical neuropsychologists work?

Clinical neuropsychologists work in a range of settings including hospitals, community services, prisons, private practice, charities, schools and the court service.

What sort of work do clinical neuropsychologists do?

Assessment

- To diagnose an illness
- To assess the impact that a that a neurological condition, such as head injury or stroke, has had on a person's thinking or mood
- To assess a person's suitability for medical treatment or an operation
- To build a profile of individual strengths and weaknesses to plan the support needed to return to work or study

Treatment

- Coping with the effects of a brain injury, for example, working on strategies to manage memory difficulties or attention process training
- Problem solving training
- Assertiveness training
- To help people cope with anxiety, depression or anger related to their neurological condition
- To help the person and their family come to terms with the impact of the illness/ injury
- To work on difficulties with adjustment, insight and self-awareness

Research

Clinical neuropsychologists are involved with research to answer questions such as:

- What are the effects of brain injury on the person and their family?
- What are the best ways to support people to come to terms with the impact of their condition?
- What sort of therapies help people to manage long-term neurological conditions?
- How can we help people return to school/work following their injury?

Find out more at: www.bps.org.uk/DON

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http://www.bps.org.uk/bpssearchablelists/SRCN

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